GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:151
ANSWERED ON:18.02.2009
MALNOURISHED CHIILDREN
Chakrabortty Shri Swadesh

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of malnourished children has increased in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any study in this regard;

(d) if so, the outcome of the study; and

(e) the details of the remedial steps taken by the Government?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) to (d): The nutritional status of children in the country is ascertained by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). As per the latest available national statistics, the percentage of underweight (weight for age) children under three years has declined from 43% as per the National Family Health Survey 2 (1998-99) to 40% as per NFHS 3 (2005-06). The details, thereof, state wise, is given overleaf at Annexure. Overall girls and boys are about equally undernourished.

(e): The Government is implementing interventions for proper growth, development and survival of children in the country through a life cycle approach. The interventions are:-

i) promotion of adequate nutrition during pregnancy,
ii) initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of birth,
iii) exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life,
iv) complementary feeding and continued breastfeeding from six months onwards,
v) micronutrient supplementation with iron folic acid for mothers and children and with Vitamin A for children at six monthly intervals from 9 months upto five years of age,
vi) food supplementation and growth monitoring through anganwadis and
vii)treatment of severe acute malnutrition through Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) set up at public health facilities. As on date 582 NRCs are functioning in the country.